

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION
Education Committee Meeting**

**LOCATION
Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference**

**Meeting Date
March 11, 2010**

Attendees:

Anna Attla, Chair
Taylor Gregg
Ric Nelson
Tonja Updike

Community Members/Guests:

Geri Benshoof
Belinda Burns
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Kay Holmes
Patrick Pillai
Christie Reinhardt
Mo Sanders
David Tarcy
Alyse Galvin
Dayna McGuire

Staff:

Teresa Holt

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo
Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL

Welcome from the Chair

Introductions

All of the Council members and guests introduced themselves.

Announcements and Good News

Teresa Holt stated that the Governor's Council awards an inclusive practice award during the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference in February. The award is to recognize educators around the state who work to include students with disabilities in regular education curriculum. This year they had 11 nominations. They printed booklets outlining each of the 11 people who were nominated, and Teresa will forward that to all the members of the Education Committee.

The winner of the award this year was Adrienna Holden from Kodiak for the work she has done in her school to create a partnership program. She has also developed a training program for those in her school and district.

Teresa stated that she just received an opportunity to nominate someone for the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation Inclusion Champion Award program. She suggested they could forward Adrienna Holden as a nominee for this award.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

There was no quorum, and the approval of the agenda and the previous meeting minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Correspondence

Teresa Holt stated that they have had two requests for a Wrightslaw boot camp again. Teresa will research how they have accomplished funding this in the past.

Teresa stated that they were requested to set up an introduction between Senator Murkowski and the national group working on federal restraint and seclusion in schools regulations.

Teresa Holt stated that LINKS Parent Resource Center requested a letter of support. The Executive Committee approved it, and they sent the letter out.

Teresa stated that the national core standards were released March 10th. People can comment on the core standards by going to www.corestandards.org. They will be taking comment until April 2, 2010. She further explained that these are core standards grade by grade for reading and math.

Teresa stated that it is probable that these common core standards are going to become national standards that every state will have to meet at each grade level and may potentially be followed by national standards-based assessments. She stated that the Department of Education is looking to see how the current Alaska standards will match with the core standards.

Partnership Liaison for DEED

Alyse Galvin stated that the partnership liaison is a new position in the Department. Her role has been learning about what organizations within the Department are serving youth affiliated with education. She stated that the Department of Education might be able to help them meet their goals, other than with finances.

Alyse stated that as part of the Alaska State Education Plan, they have goals for youth, which involve both producing students who have a world class education and also being cognizant and respectful of the communities and families that are raising children and making sure that parents' voices are heard. She stated that the Education Plan is available on the Department of Education's website.

Alyse Galvin stated that as part of her work, she is helping to thread community, families, and culture into education. She is working on four different projects, the first of which is a website. She is trying to develop parent pages so that parents can easily navigate and find what they are looking for.

Another project that Alyse is working on is a middle school initiative. They will be gathering the leadership for four districts as well as parents and community organizations to discuss what a successful middle schooler looks like. This meeting will take place on March 31st. The districts they are working with are Fairbanks, Lower Yukon, Bering Strait and Anchorage.

Alyse shared that in the next few months, she will be working with folks who have done a lot of work in early literacy with the intent to pull them together to discuss how they can help families and organizations grow in this area.

Alyse Galvin stated that her door is open and people can feel free to call her any time at 269-4606.

Teresa Holt stated that one way the Education Committee can partner with her is to comment or make suggestions on the new website and to assist in supplying her with additional resources if necessary. Teresa also suggested that someone from their group could participate with the early literacy group to talk about how that affects children with disabilities.

Review of Indicator 8

David Tarcy stated that every year the Department of Education and Early Development and the Office of Special Education has to submit a report to the federal government about the health of the special education system in Alaska. There are 20 different indicators the State must report on.

David stated that indicator 8 is the indicator about parent involvement, and it asks how well districts are doing in involving parents in their children's education.

He stated that if people have any questions about the information contained in the indicators, they can feel free to contact him at SESA. His e-mail address is dtarcy@SESA.org and his phone number is 907-980-6447.

David Tarcy explained the highlights of indicator 8 by stating that the survey asks 26 questions of parents. There were over 17,000 surveys sent to every parent who has a child with an IEP. The response rate was 19.3 percent with a total of 3,404 surveys returned.

He stated that the surveys are tallied according to a scale score based on all the answers to the questions. If people have a score over 600, they are considered to have been facilitated by the school district. Last year they had almost 40 percent of respondents score over 600 on this survey. He stated that according to the benchmark, they are doing quite well. He also noted that kindergarten parents had an average score of 630, and parents of students in 10th grade had an average score of 579.

David Tarcy explained the data collection process which begins with a notice sent out to all the families in April notifying them to be looking for this survey to come. They send out the survey, and then in late June, they send out a reminder, and in July they send out a second survey to the non-responders. He noted that they may change their timelines this next year and will try to get surveys out while children are still in school.

David explained that parents who have students with specific learning disabilities were slightly under-represented. He noted that Caucasians were over-represented by 4.5 percent. Parents of mail students and parents of female students were equally represented.

David Tarcy then reviewed the survey questions and responses with the committee members.

David Tarcy explained that he puts the survey results into a report that he gives to Art Arnold and Sharon Fishel and the Special Education Office, and they put together the report that goes into the APR that goes to the federal government.

Teresa Holt asked if they break the results out by rural and urban regions. David Tarcy replied that they do not, but they are going to start including that in their analysis.

David stated that they compared the results from 2008 to 2009 and their results improved. There was an increase from 44 percent to 48.9 percent.

Dayna McGuire suggested sending a notice to tribal social services agencies to get greater response from the villages. Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus added that care coordinators and case managers that work in the DD programs in the

villages are probably in contact with a lot of the same families.

David Tarcy stated that the scores by disability are as follows:

- Other health impaired – average score: 596
- Developmentally delayed – average score: 630
- Hearing impaired – average score: 674
- Speech or language – average score: 621

David Tarcy stated that one could infer from those numbers that parents of students with other health impairments are not as happy as some of the other parents.

Teresa Holt stated that one thing they can do is talk to the ASSEC planners to make a recommendation that they bring up speakers to do trainings in those particular disabilities such as ADHD, FAS, Asperger's, etc. Christie Reinhardt stated that she believes it is very important for schools and students to have more information about students, particularly with ADHD.

Work Plan Progress

SB 109 – Removal of the HSGQE

Teresa Holt state that SB 109 is probably not going to pass this session, but Senator Bettye Davis has promised to reintroduce it at the beginning of the next session. Teresa noted that one of the reasons it may not pass is because there isn't a companion bill on the House side. The other reason that it may not pass is because Con Bunde did a public survey that resulted in 75 percent of Alaskans saying that they want to continue with the exit exam. Con Bunde also brought in the business community to testify at the least hearing that they don't want the exit exam to be removed.

Governor's Performance Scholarship

Teresa Holt stated that there are two bills, HB 297 and SB 224 relating to the Governor's Performance Scholarship. She stated that the important thing this committee needs to know about the scholarship is that it requires students to get a diploma, and in order to get a diploma, students need to pass the exit exam.

Restraint and Seclusion in Schools

Teresa Holt stated that the House bill on the federal level passed the House on restraint and seclusion of students in schools. It is now moving to the Senate side.

Important Future Meetings/Conferences/Trainings

- American Council on Rural Special Education, March 24 – 27, Memphis

Teresa Holt stated that she, Anna Attla and Tom Cyrus will be attending this conference and will bring back information to share with the committee about what is going on at the national level. Christie Reinhardt stated that Tamara Kruse, a parent navigator from Stone Soup Group in Fairbanks, will also be attending.

Report from the State Board of Education

Geri Benshoof stated that they have their next meeting in two weeks, and she will have an update for the committee at the next teleconference. She stated that they have a new board member named James Mariner who is replacing Shirley Holloway.

Report from SESA

Teresa Holt stated she will e-mail committee members the report from SESA.

Report from DEED

Teresa Holt stated that she spoke with Art Arnold who told her that they are close to hiring someone to take Don Enoch's place. This will bring them up to being fully staffed, hopefully, by the end of the month.

Other Information for the Good of the Order

Christie Reinhart stated that a survey was conducted that found that parents in the Anchorage School District (ASD) are not very happy with the amount of information they had about the special education process. She stated that

ASD is partnering with Stone Soup Group to do ASPIRE training during the months of March, April and May and it is geared for parents new to the process.

Christie stated that Kodiak, Sitka and Ketchikan have asked Stone Soup to come and do presentations with their districts. She stated that if anyone is interested in having parent training come to their district, they should give her a call.

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2010 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.